

Delegation of Belarus

**STATEMENT BY
THE PERMANENT DELEGATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS
TO THE OSCE AT THE 937th SPECIAL MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

17 January 2013

**In response to the statement by Mr. Leonid Kozhara,
OSCE Chairperson-in-Office and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine**

Mr. Chairperson,

We join in welcoming the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, Mr. Leonid Kozhara. We congratulate our Ukrainian colleagues on the start of their important and responsible mission of chairing the OSCE. We are delighted that this year the Organization is being headed by our important partner and neighbour, with whom we are bound by centuries of shared history and culture.

Chairing the OSCE is no easy task, especially now when the Organization is experiencing what are by no means its best days. A lack of trust and the absence of mutually respectful dialogue among the participating States are considerably complicating the efforts to work out joint solutions to existing problems and hampering the necessary adaptation of the OSCE to the current realities.

Responsibility for this undoubtedly lies with all the participating States. What kind of future the OSCE will have and how safe and stable our region will be depend on all of us. However, the Chairmanship can and must strive to create the kind of atmosphere within the Organization that will assist us most effectively to find acceptable forms of constructive collaboration and to arrive at joint pragmatic solutions.

It seems that Ukraine has all the qualities needed to deal successfully with this task. There is the necessary reserve of energy and a desire to change things for the better. There are ambitious and, at the same time, realistic priorities and goals based on fundamental OSCE principles and values. And, lastly, there is an understanding of the real needs of the different participating States and an awareness of the particularly sensitive nature of certain questions.

We share the Chairperson-in-Office's view that the OSCE should serve as a platform for open dialogue and the elaboration of collective responses to modern-day threats and challenges. We welcome the focus of our Ukrainian colleagues on a balanced approach to all the security dimensions on the basis of co-operation and trust.

Overall we support the basic priorities of the work outlined by the Ukrainian Chairmanship for 2013. They are for the most part in line with our own position and vision.

We agree that the Helsinki+40 process can give a positive impetus to the OSCE's activities. This process provides a long-term framework for further work in realizing the goal of the Astana Summit, namely building a security community in the OSCE region, and for discussions on improving the Organization's activities.

We believe that it is impossible to strengthen security and increase the effectiveness of the OSCE and its relevance for all participating States without a comprehensive reform of the Organization, taking into account all the concerns that have come to light. We hope that significant progress will be made this year in drawing up a constituent document for the OSCE as well as common standards and rules for election observation. Furthermore, we trust that substantive dialogue will continue on optimizing the human dimension and improving the modalities for the holding of OSCE meetings.

We are convinced of the need for further efforts to strengthen the first basket and increase military stability, transparency and predictability in our region. We welcome Ukraine's intention to initiate within the OSCE dialogue on the role and future of the conventional arms control regime in Europe that will take into account the security interests of all participating States. Belarus also stands ready for substantive work on updating the OSCE Principles Governing Non-Proliferation.

Combating transnational threats to security should remain one of the key areas of the OSCE's work. Important framework documents were adopted last year on countering terrorism, the threat posed by narcotic drugs and the development of police co-operation. Their implementation is a major task for the long term. We also welcome the continuation of discussions within the OSCE on strengthening security in cyberspace. We support the Ukrainian Chairmanship's intention to pay particular attention to the problems of border security.

Resolving the so-called frozen conflicts in the OSCE area is undoubtedly a priority, as the Chairperson-in-Office mentioned today. Belarus is ready to assist in these efforts, in particular as a member of the OSCE Minsk Group and as the country chairing the Commonwealth of Independent States in 2013.

We believe that the OSCE is still not making full use of its potential in the economic and environmental sphere. And yet in a time of financial and economic crisis the development of this area and concrete assistance are particularly called for. We share the Chairmanship's view that our Organization needs a strong second dimension. We support the focus proposed by Ukraine on energy and environmental problems. We are aware of the added value of the OSCE's contribution to international efforts to promote new and renewable energy sources. We are also ready to play an active part in further discussion on reviewing the implementation and the possible updating of the 2003 Maastricht Strategy.

There is no denying that the OSCE's human dimension remains an important but, at the same time, highly sensitive area of our work. It seems to us that in order to ensure progress in this field, it will be important to place particular emphasis this year on a unifying agenda and due consideration of the priorities of the different participating States.

In that connection, we welcome the willingness of the Ukrainian Chairmanship to deal in earnest with the problem of combating trafficking in human beings, along with other human rights issues. This topic is of particular interest to Belarus as a country making an important contribution to the global anti-trafficking efforts. We are also pleased that the topics of freedom of movement, election observation, and educating young people in tolerance and non-discrimination have been included among the Chairmanship's priorities.

We trust that these and other areas of work will be reflected in a balanced manner in the work of the Human Dimension Committee and in the schedule of annual OSCE events in the third basket.

The most pressing issue today is the adoption of the OSCE budget for 2013. We hope that in the interests of our Organization an acceptable and balanced solution that takes into account the approaches of all participating States and the existing financial realities will be found as quickly as possible.

In conclusion, we should like to wish our Ukrainian friends every success in their work, an inexhaustible reserve of energy and patience, and significant results at the Ministerial Council meeting in Kyiv.

Minister, you and your team in Vienna can count on a constructive approach, co-operation and support from Belarus during the Ukrainian Chairmanship of the OSCE.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.